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ABSTRACT

The Portsmouth, New Hampshire, project for adolescents, known as the KIDS Program (Kids In Difficult Situations), is a regional program emphasizing family intervention. KIDS has attempted to mainstream 30 emotionally handicapped adolescents into all regular academic and vocational high school courses. Individual, group, and family counseling are offered by teacher/counselors and special education counselor/school social workers. The program offers three levels of participation: full time placement in a self contained class, part time placement in KIDS Program with part time mainstreamed placement, and support services available to supplement full time regular academic and vocational programing. The academic/vocational component of KIDS stresses skills, self organization, and behavior control within a highly structured environment. Therapeutic approaches include counseling as well as parent groups and home visits. The behavioral component stresses a point system using community incentives and providing realistic consequences. (CL)

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The Portsmouth Project (KIDS)

A Successful Model Mainstream Program for Emotionally Handicapped Adolescents in Public Secondary Schools

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The following program description was presented at the Council for Exceptional Children 61st Annual Convention in Detroit, Michigan, April 5th, 1983.

The Portsmouth Project for adolescents, also known as the KIDS Program (KIDS In Difficult Situations), is located at Portsmouth High School in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The KIDS Program has a therapeutic orientation with an emphasis on fami'y intervention. More specifically, there are 4 unique features of this regional program which make it so successful. Firstly, the emphasis of the program is to successfully integrate or mainstream by the implementation of appropriate strategies 30 identified emotionally handicapped adolescents into all regular academic and vocational courses at the high school level. The students are mainstreamed 4-5 classes per day in regular courses involving over 40 classroom teachers. Secondly, the program is located in the High School, which provides access to all academic and vocational courses. Another unique feature is the provision of therapeutic services (i.e., individual, group, and family counseling) to the adolescent and family by the KIDS staff which consists of a teacher/counselor and a special education counselor/school social worker. Both professionals in the program work very closely together as a team in decision making and implementing program strategies. Also working in the program are a consulting school psychologist and 4 paraprofessionals. The fourth unique characteristic of the KIDS Program is the support that is derived from the school administration (i.e., principal, vice principals, and central office administrators) regarding disciplinary and attendance issues as well as the overall operation of the program. It is because of this support that the KIDS staff rather than the administration handle all disciplinary action.

Before describing the 3 levels of participation, and 3 components of the program, it is important to note that the typical EH student enrolled in KIDS has been physically abused, psychologically abused, has abused alcohol and/or drugs and has experienced a divorce situation in his/her family.

Levels of Participation

The primary goal of the KIDS Program is to return the adolescent to the mainstream of public education functioning at an achievement level that is both age and ability appropriate. To insure this, the adolescent may require various levels of participation in the Program.

1. Full-time placement in KIDS (Self-contained)

   Full-time placement is generally the least restrictive environment when the adolescent's behavior has generated such an academic and social-emotional lag that participation in regular programs is prohibitive, or when his/her behavior is considered to warrant closer supervision than can be provided in regular classroom environments. All students participating in KIDS on a full-time basis receive individual and group counseling, and are involved in a comprehensive behavior management system. Their families also receive therapeutic services.

II. Part-time placement in KIDS

Student is involved in KIDS Program for 2-3 hours per day. Part-time participation includes individual and group counseling for the adolescent and therapeutic services for the family. The adolescent's participation in the mainstream is monitored very closely on a daily basis.

III. KIDS Outreach

This level is available to students who have participated in the KIDS Program as described in levels #I and II, and who continue to require support from Special Needs personnel while they are involved full-time in regular academic and vocational programs.

Components of the Program

I. Academic/Vocational

There is an emphasis on increasing the academic/prevocational/vocational skills/self-organization and behavior control within a highly structured learning environment. To successfully mainstream the EH students, consistent communication with the regular education teachers is essential. This is accomplished through daily personal contact and weekly written teacher evaluations which are shared with the EH students. Further, academic and vocational resource classes are provided for those students whose achievement levels are too low in one or more subject areas to be mainstreamed in those subject areas.

II. Therapeutic

The KIDS Program is family oriented in its approach. Emphasis is placed on modification of the family environment with the expectation that this may produce desired changes in the child's behavior. Counselors work very closely with parents and siblings of the child. Opening the lines of communication with the family and student is accomplished through:

1. student journal/self-evaluation
2. individual counseling
3. group counseling
4. family counseling
5. parent groups
6. home visits
7. weekly parent contact

III. Behavioral

Monitoring of behavior to assess the child's ability to take responsibility for his/her behavior is accomplished through daily charts and teacher/staff observations. Based on these shared observations, a comprehensive behavior management program is employed. There are two elements of this program:

1. Point system in which incentives are earned with many of these incentives deriving from, or taking place in, the community.

2. Provision of realistic consequences, such as time out and in-school suspension.

This component exemplifies the program's emphasis on decision making and accepting responsibility for one's actions.

The Portsmouth Project (KIDS)

A Successful Model Mainstream Program for

Emotionally Handicapped Adolescents in Public Secondary Schools

Abstract

The KIDS Program description was presented at the Council for Exceptional Children 61st Annual Convention in Detroit, Michigan, April 5th, 1983. This successful model mainstream program for identified emotionally handicapped adolescents at the high school level has a therapeutic orientation with an emphasis on family intervention. Also, a comprehensive behavior management system is utilized. The program has 3 components and 3 levels of participation. The authors delineate 4 unique features responsible for the successful integration of 30 identified EH students, involving over 40 regular education teachers in a public high school; namely, the location of the program in the high school building, proper implementation of mainstreaming techniques, provision of therapeutic services by the KIDS staff, and a supportive administration.